

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NASA-01 OES-09 L-03 DODE-00 PM-05
SS-15 SP-02 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANTANANARIVO 1483

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: TSPA, MA, US
SUBJ: NASA STATION NEGOTIATIONS

REF: STATE 194597

1. SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST: PRESIDENTIAL SPECIAL ASSISTANT GEORGES SOLOFOSON TOLD ME ON AUGUST 3 THAT DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF MADAGASCAR (DRM) IS NOW READY TO AUTHORIZE INSPECTION OF NASA STATION BY TWO RPT TWO NASA INSPECTORS, TO BE FOLLOWED BY NEGOTIATIONS REGARDING DIVISION OF EQUIPMENT BETWEEN DRM AND USG AND FINAL PAYMENT DUE DRM BY USG. HE SAID TWO INSPECTORS WERE ALL HE WAS ABLE TO AUTHORIZE BUT THAT THEY COULD TAKE A LOCALLY HIRED PHOTOGRAPHER INTO STATION WITH THEM. HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT SOME OF SCIENTIFIC EQUIPMENT WOULD REVERT TO DRM IN ADDITION TO BUILDINGS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT. ACTION REQUEST: I RECOMMEND THAT NASA ACCEPT THIS OFFER AND SEND ME SOONEST NAMES OF TWO INSPECTORS CHOSEN FOR THIS TASK. UPON RECEIPT OF NAMES SOLOFOSON WILL AUTHORIZE DRM EMBASSY WASHINGTON TO ISSUE VISAS. USIS PHOTOGRAPHER READY TO ASSIST INSPECTORS. END SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST.

2. SOLOFOSON STARTED CONVERSATION BY ASKING ME WHAT
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WAS NEW. I CONFINED MYSELF TO MY PERSONAL PLANS IN ORDER TO LET HIM INTRODUCE SUBSTANCE OF CONVERSATION. HE DID SO BY SAYING THAT NASA IMPASSE HAD LASTED LONG ENOUGH AND THAT DRM WAS READY FOR ITS PART TO MAKE MAXIMUM CONCESSIONS TO REACH A SETTLEMENT AND REMOVE THIS OBSTACLE SO THAT BILATERAL RELATIONS COULD START OFF ON A NEW BASIS.

3. SOLOFOSON THEN REFERRED TO OUR PREVIOUS CONVERSATIONS OF LATE LAST YEAR AND SAID DRM NOW READY TO PERMIT INSPECTION BY TWO INSPECTORS WITH NEGOTIATIONS TO FOLLOW ON DIVISION OF EQUIPMENT AND FINAL PAYMENT OF \$200,000. HE ACKNOWLEDGED MY REMINDER THAT \$200,000 WAS A MAXIMUM FIGURE FOR FINAL PAYMENT AND THAT EXACT AMOUNT WOULD DEPEND UPON CONDITION OF MATERIAL TO BE RECUPERATED. HE THEN WENT BACK TO AN OLD ARGUMENT OF HIS THAT IT WAS NOT SO MUCH A QUESTION OF MONEY AS OF PRINCIPLE. THE DRM HAD A POLITICAL PROBLEM IN THIS RETNPCUIAUIW(#) HOPED THE USG WOULD HELP THE MALAGASY AUTHORITIES TO DEAL WITH IN RETURN FOR THE DRM CONCESSION. LATER IN THE CONVERSATION HE SAID WE COULD DECIDE HOW TO WORD THE SETTLEMENT DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS. BY THAT I UNDERSTOOD HE MEANT THAT WORDING SHOULD MAKE IT MORE ACCEPTABLE TO DRM, I.E. SEEM LIKE A DRM SUCCESS.

4. I PRESSED HIM TO ALLOW MORE THAN TWO INSPECTORS IN AS THIS DRM LIMITATION HAD BEEN ONE OF STUMBLING BLOCKS TO AN INSPECTION LAST YEAR AND INSPECTORS WANTED TO TAKE PHOTOGRAPHS OF INSTALLATIONS. HE SAID THAT HE WAS NOT AUTHORIZED BY HIS INSTRUCTIONS TO GO OVER THIS FIGURE BUT SAID INSPECTORS COULD TAKE IN LOCALLY HIRED PHOTOGRAPHERS WITH THEM. HE SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE NAMES AND PARTICULARS OF TWO MEN
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CHOSEN, IF THEY WERE DIFFERENT FROM THOSE PROPOSED LAST YEAR, AND THAT ON RECEIPT OF SAME HE WOULD AUTHORIZE ISSUANCE OF VISAS IN WASHINGTON.

5. SOLOFOSON ALSO SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THE INSPECTION WOULD APPLY ONLY TO THE MATERIALS WHICH NASA WAS INTERESTED IN RECUPERATING AS SET FORTH IN A LIST WE HAD SUBMITTED. COMMENT: ACCORDING TO EMBASSY RECORDS, WE HAVE ONLY SUBMITTED LIST OF NON-SCIENTIFIC EQUIPMENT TO REVERT TO DRM. WHEN I QUESTIONED EXISTENCE OF THE LIST HE MENTIONED HE LOOKED THROUGH SOME PAPERS BUT COULD NOT FIND IT. I THINK HE WAS JUST CONFUSED ABOUT CONTENT OF LIST WE HAD SUBMITTED. AT ANY RATE I DID NOT PRESS MATTER SINCE I ASSUME NASA NOT INTERESTED IN CONDITION OF PROPERTIES WHICH WILL REVERT TO DRM BUT ONLY WHAT IT WISHES TO RECUPERATE. END COMMENT.

6. I TOLD SOLOFOSON THAT DRM POSITION SEEMED CONSISTENT WITH THAT OF US AS FAR AS INITIAL STEPS TO BE TAKEN TOWARD SETTLEMENT. I TOLD HIM WE ALSO WANTED TO REMOVE THIS OBSTACLE TO BETTER RELATIONS AND THAT I WAS GLAD TO SEE DRM APPARENTLY SHARED THIS WISH. I

TOLD HIM THAT I HAD ALSO BEEN PLEASED TO SEE, IN THIS RESPECT, THE CORDIAL TONE OF PRESIDENT RATISIRAKA'S MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT CARTER, ACKNOWLEDGING LATTER'S NATIONAL DAY MESSAGE (SEPTTEL).

7. I THEN SPOKE TO HIM FROM REFTTEL INFORMING HIM THIS WAS LATEST USG POSITION AND THAT IT LEFT OPEN THE POSSIBILITY OF ALLOWING SOME OF THE SCIENTIFIC EQUIPMENT TO REVERT TO THE DRM DEPENDING UPON PROGRESS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS WHICH WOULD FOLLOW THE INSPECTION. I TOLD HIM I HOPED WE WOULD HAVE AN EARLY INSPECTION AND THAT DRM NUMERICAL LIMITATION ON INSPECTORS WOULD NOT TURN OUT TO BE AN IMPEDIMENT TO IT.

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8. COMMENT: SOLOFOSON APPARENTLY CONSIDERS DRM AUTHORIZATION FOR AN UNCONDITIONAL INSPECTION I.E. WITHOUT PREVIOUS USG COMMITMENT TO A \$200,000 PAYMENT, AN IMPORTANT CONCESSION. I HOPE NASA WILL AGREE TO SEND INSPECTORS OUT, EVEN IF IT IS NOT NUMBER THEY WANT, JUST TO GET THINGS STARTED. IF A THIRD INSPECTOR TURNS OUT TO BE INDISPENSIBLE, WE CAN TAKE UP THE MATTER WITH THE DRM AT THAT TIME AND MAYBE, WITH SOMETHING UNDERWAY, THEY WILL BE MORE WILLING TO CEDE ON THIS POINT.BARRETT

NOTE BY OC/T: PARA 3 AS RECEIVED.

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